KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

(Island Alive/Strand Releasing, 1985)

screenplay

by

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Dir: Hector Babenco
Prod: David Weisman

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The screen is BLACK. We hear a "woman's" VOICE.

VOICE OF MOLINA
She, uh. Well, something a little strange, that's what you notice, that she's not a woman like all the others.
(pause)
She seems all wrapped up in herself. Lost in a world she carries deep inside her. But surrounded by a world of luxury.

FADE TO:

INT. PRISON CELL -- NIGHT

The camera PANS a stark cell and discovers signs of a woman's touch -- clothesline, earrings, glamor magazines, pin-ups of Lana Turner and Rita Hayworth.

VOICE OF MOLINA
A sumptuous budoir. Her bed all quilted satin. Chiffon drapes. From her window you can see the Eiffel Tower.
(pause)
Suddenly her maid brings in a gift-wrapped box, a token from an admirer. She's a cabaret star, of the highest rank. She opens the box, it's a diamond bracelet, but she sends it back.
(pause)
Men are really at her feet. She's known a few, but not the one she's been waiting for all her life -- a real man.

The camera finds the PRISONER who is speaking.

He is LUIS MOLINA, 41, his red-tinted hair no longer hiding the gray. He has the seasoned face of a man who has seen it all, and been hurt by most of it.

MOLINA
Her maid has prepared her a foam bath. The star takes a towel and wraps it around her hair like a turban. Her fingernails painted a rosy peach, she unfastens her taffeta night gown and lets it slide smoothly down her thighs to the tile floor.

Molina, playing the role, wraps a red towel around his head and sashays toward the other bunk.

MOLINA
Her skin glistens, her petite ankle slips into the perfumed water, then her sensuous legs, until finally her whole body is caressed with foam.

The CELL-MATE glances over his shoulder. He is VALENTIN ARREGUI, 34, his arms marked by torture. He has the intense look of a man who has been hurt in more ways than one.

VALENTIN
I told you. -- No erotic descriptions.

Molina hides his delight at having evoked a response.

MOLINA
Whatever, but she's a ravishing woman, do you know what I mean? I mean the most ravishing woman in the world.

VALENTIN
Yeah, sure.

MOLINA
She really is -- perfect figure, classical features, but with these big green eyes.

We drift into the MOVIE he describes. A glamorous STAR in a lavish bathtub caresses her skin with foam. Valentin's voice wrenches us back to the cell.

VALENTIN
They're black.

MOLINA
I'm the one who saw the movie, but if that's what you want -- big black eyes.
(resumes)
Kind eyes, tender eyes, but beware. They can see everything.
(pause)
There's nothing you can hide from them.

Another MOVIE flash. The Star steps from the foamy water and gazes into a mirror with big sad eyes.

MOLINA
No matter how lonely she may be, she keeps men at a distance.

VALENTIN
(laughs)
She's probably got bad breath or something.

MOLINA
If you're going to crack jokes about a film I happen to be fond of, there's no reason to go on.

Molina glares at him. Valentin turns away, too weak to care one way or the other.

VALENTIN
Alright, alright. Go ahead.

MOLINA
Suddenly we're in Paris! Troops are marching right underneath the Arc de Triomphe. Really handsome soldiers, and the French girls are applauding as they pass by.
(pause)
Then we're on this typical Parisian back-street, dead end, sort of looking up a hill.

Another flash. TWO FRENCHMEN with yarmulkes unload a truck in the dark. The images resemble a slapdash Nazi propaganda film.

MOLINA
And these really weird-looking Frenchmen, not the typical ones with the berets, are unloading a truck. It's wartime, of course, and the boxes contain contraband delicacies. Like canned meat... the best cheeses... peaches in syrup --.

VALENTIN
(sitting up)
Don't talk about food.

MOLINA
Not to mention the hams, and the pates --.

VALENTIN
I'm serious. No food and no naked women.

Valentin struggles to the shit-bucket in the corner and, exhausted, leans against the wall as he urinates.

MOLINA
You still feeling dizzy?

VALENTIN
It's my back.

MOLINA
You've been bleeding again. Look at your shirt, it's all wet.

VALENTIN
It's just sweat. I had another fever break.

MOLINA
What do you think so far?
(pause)
Isn't it fabulous?

VALENTIN
It helps pass the time.

Valentin hobbles toward his bunk. His shirtback is streaked with old bloodstains.

MOLINA
Does that mean you like it?

VALENTIN
Doesn't help any great cause, but I guess it's alright.

MOLINA
Blessed Mary, is that all you can talk about? You must've studied Political Philosophies in school.

VALENTIN
The phrase is Political Science, and the answer is no, I studied Journalism.

MOLINA
Ah! So you can appreciate a good story.

VALENTIN
And easily spot a cheap one.

MOLINA
Well, I know it's nothing terribly intellectual like you must be used to. It's just a romance, but it's so beautiful.
(pause)
Now. Suddenly this military convoy rushes forward.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS BACKSTREET -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Spotlights hit the Frenchmen unloading the truck. German TROOPS grab them. A handsome LIEUTENANT shoves one against the truck.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Marvelous German soldiers catch those weird smugglers in the act and arrest them all.

A small truck lurks in the shadows.

VOICE OF MOLINA
But watching nearby is this small truck, with these two French thugs from the Resistance who are spying on the Germans. -- This hulking Clubfoot and his half-deaf Flunky.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin sits up on his bunk.

VALENTIN
Wait a minute. Those weird guys the Germans arrested?

MOLINA
Yes?

VALENTIN
What do you mean, they didn't look French?

MOLINA
They didn't look French. They looked, uh, Turkish. I'm not sure, they had like these caps on their heads -- like these, like these, uh... Turkish. Like fezes.

VALENTIN
Those caps are yarmulkes. Can't you see this is a fucking anti-Semitic film?

MOLINA
Oh, come on!

VALENTIN
Wait. This must've been a German movie, right?

MOLINA
I don't know, it was from years ago. -- Look. I don't explain my movies. It just ruins the emotion.

VALENTIN
This must've been a Nazi propaganda film done during the war.

MOLINA
I don't know, that's just the background. This is where the important part begins, the part about the lovers. It's divine.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS CABARET (NAZI MOVIE) -- NIGHT

Deco doors swing open. Elegant waiters move along dimly-lit tables.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Every night the chic set flocks to this exclusive club -- with lovers at every table, spies in every corner. And the top officers of the German High Command.
(pause)
One of them is Werner. Werner, so distant, so divine. And the Chief of Counter-Intelligence for all France.
(pause)
And Michelle with her angel face, the cigarette girl who really is working for the -- well, you'll see.

Michelle leaves the table of the handsome blond Werner. Musical FANFARE. Dancing couples sit and applaud.

VOICE OF MOLINA
And then, the moment they're all waiting for.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina opens his clothesline towels like a stage curtain and strikes a grandiose pose.

MOLINA
Stepping into the spotlight is that legendary star, that ravishing chanteuse -- Leni Lamaison!

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET (NAZI MOVIE) -- NIGHT

LENI turns to the crowd in a deco pose and, singing, glides and swirls among the hushed tables. Werner can't take his eyes off her.

Michelle hurries backstage and picks up the phone.

MICHELLE
Yes?

CLUBFOOT
(on phone)
Did you get the map?

MICHELLE
No, there was no time.

CLUBFOOT
(hanging up)
Just get it. Nothing else matters. Vive La France.

Leni, still singing, passes Werner's table with a haughty glance and concludes with a flourish, then sees him gazing at her. Wild applause.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Werner's eyes begin to burn into her soul. Eyes like the claws of an eagle -- inescapable.

Leni clutches her pounding heart and dashes away from his piercing eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin muffles his scornful laughter. Molina, miffed, plunks down on his bunk.

MOLINA
What are you laughing at?
(more laughter)
Well, it must be something.

Valentin stares straight at Molina.

VALENTIN
At you.
(looks away)
And me.

Molina blows out his candle. The two men sit in silence on opposite ends of the dark cell.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

TWO GUARDS drag an old HOODED PRISONER into a cell across the courtyard. His shirt is covered with bloodstains.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin watches through the food slot in the door. Molina wakes up and rubs his eyes.

MOLINA
What's going on?

VALENTIN
(tense whisper)
Quiet! They're bringing in someone new.

MOLINA
What time is it anyway?

VALENTIN
He's really bleeding.

MOLINA
Is it a political prisoner?

VALENTIN
They don't treat you like that for stealing bananas.

MOLINA
You know him?

Valentin, deeply disturbed, says nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR -- DAWN

GUARDS conduct the morning bedcheck. Prisoners bark out their names.

VALENTIN
Valentin Arregui!

MOLINA
Luis Molina!

Valentin strains to see the hooded prisoner across the courtyard. The guard shoves him in his cell.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina finishes shaving and offers the razor.

MOLINA
Do you want to shave?

VALENTIN
(turns away)
Shit.

MOLINA
Well, I didn't mean your legs.

Valentin looks out the crack in the metal wall plates.

MOLINA
What is the matter?

VALENTIN
I don't understand why they stopped my interrogation. It's been almost a week.

MOLINA
Why couldn't they give me that handsome leading blond man to keep me company -- instead of you.

VALENTIN
What the hell are you talking about?

MOLINA
Afraid to talk about sex?

VALENTIN
You really wanna know, Molina? I find you boring.

MOLINA
Darling, you don't know page one. You know I'm a faggot? Well, congratulations. You know I corrupted a minor? Well, that's even on TV, film at eleven.

VALENTIN
You really like those Nazi blonds, don't you?

MOLINA
Well, no, you see I detest politics but I'm mad about the leading man. He's so romantic.
(pause)
Should I be shot for that?

VALENTIN
Your Nazis are about as romantic as the fucking warden and his torture room.

MOLINA
I can imagine.

VALENTIN
(hard)
No. You can't.

Valentin stares into his eyes. Molina, chagrined, looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin, unable to sleep, climbs up to the barred window and stares at the city lights in the dark. Molina, drowsy, sits up on his bunk.

MOLINA
You can't sleep?
(pause)
Mind if I tell my picture?

Valentin stares out the window.

MOLINA
After the show, Leni changes into a satin evening-gown that makes her look heavenly. Firm breasts. Thin waist. Smooth hips.

VALENTIN
Is this propaganda or porno?

MOLINA
Just listen, you'll see.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

KNOCK on the door. Michelle, upset, enters Leni's ornate dressing room.

MICHELLE
Excuse me. Leni.

LENI
What is it, Michelle?

MICHELLE
(near tears)
Leni, I'm a traitor. A traitor to France.

LENI
What do you mean?

MICHELLE
I'm going to have a baby. But the father is a young Lieutenant of the Occupation Army.

LENI
Is that so? My poor Michelle.

MICHELLE
But he loves me. And wants to get married as soon as he can get permission.

LENI
I really can't understand. How could you fall in love with an enemy of our France?

MICHELLE
Love has no country, Leni.
(pause)
But there's something else you don't know. I'm working for the Resist --.

Another KNOCK. Michelle gasps.

LENI
Come in!

A MESSENGER enters with a bouquet of flowers. The two women sigh with relief.

MESSENGER
For you, Madame.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin shakes his head in disgust.

VALENTIN
How can you remember all this crap? You must be making it up.

MOLINA
No, I'm not, I swear. Well, I embroider a little, so you can see it the way I did.

VALENTIN
God help me.

MOLINA
You atheists never stop talking about God.

VALENTIN
And you gays never face facts. Fantasies are no escape.

MOLINA
If you've got the keys to that door, I will gladly follow. Otherwise I'll escape in my own way, thank you.

VALENTIN
Then your life is as trivial as your movies. -- I'm going to sleep.

MOLINA
Tell the truth, Valentin. Who do you identify with the most -- the Clubfoot patriot or the handsome Werner?

VALENTIN
Who do <u>you</u> identify with?

MOLINA
Oh, the singer. She's the star. I'm always the heroine.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Sunlight streams through the bars. Molina slices an avocado and offers it to Valentin.

MOLINA
Have some, it's delicious.

VALENTIN
No thanks.

MOLINA
What's wrong, you don't like it?

VALENTIN
Sure I like it, but no thanks.

MOLINA
Well, then go ahead and have some. It's a long time till lunch.

VALENTIN
Can't afford to get spoiled.

MOLINA
Do you really think eating this avocado will make you spoiled and weak? Enjoy what life offers you.

VALENTIN
What life "offers" me is the struggle. When you're dedicated to that, pleasure becomes secondary.

MOLINA
Does your girlfriend think the same thing?

VALENTIN
(suspicious)
How do you know I have a girl?

MOLINA
(shrugs)
It's the normal thing. Does she avoid pleasure too?

VALENTIN
She knows what really counts. That the most important thing is serving a cause that is noble.

MOLINA
What kind of cause is that, one that doesn't let you eat an avocado?

VALENTIN
(turns away)
Molina, you would never under-stand.

MOLINA
Well, I understand one thing. I offer you half of my precious avocado and you throw it back in my face!

VALENTIN
Don't act like that. You sound just like a --.

MOLINA
Like a what? Say it. Like a woman, you mean.

Valentin shrugs yes.

MOLINA
What's wrong with being like a woman? Why do only women get to be sensitive? Why not a man, a dog, or a faggot? If more men acted like women, there wouldn't be so much violence. -- Like that!

Molina points at the welts on Valentin's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON CORRIDOR -- DAY

A GUARD walks down the corridor and unlocks their door.

VALENTIN (O.S.)
Maybe you have a point, a flimsy one but still --.

MOLINA (O.S.)
Oh nice! Maybe I have a point!

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

The fat guard steps into their cell.

GUARD
Molina, today's yer lucky day.
The Warden wanna talk to ya.

Molina is led away.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina mends a shirt with needle and thread. Valentin cleans his teeth with a damp rag.

VALENTIN
Why did the Warden want to see you?

MOLINA
My lawyer called. Parole seems out of the question.
(sighs)
For a while, at least.

VALENTIN
How'd he treat you, the Warden?

MOLINA
Like a faggot, same as always.
(lights out)
Oh, no. Shit.

Curfew BUZZER. Molina lights a candle and places it near the photo of his mother.

MOLINA
He told me something else. My mother's not doing too well. She has high blood-pressure, and her heart is kind of weak.

VALENTIN
People can go on forever like that.

MOLINA
(melancholy)
Sure, but not if you upset them. Can you imagine the shame of having a son in prison?
(pause)
And the reason.

VALENTIN
Go to sleep, you'll feel better.

MOLINA
No, only one thing can help.

VALENTIN
(grudgingly)
Sure, man. Go ahead.

MOLINA
Man! Is there a man in here? Don't let him go!
(looks under bed)
Did he get away?

VALENTIN
(exasperated smile)
Okay, cut the crap and tell your movie.

Molina, beaming, spins his web of romantic intrigue.

MOLINA
And now, waiting in the moonlight behind the cabaret is Werner's limousine.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABARET BACKDOOR -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner watches Leni say goodbye to Michelle.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Werner's eyes are locked on the backstage exit. "La sortie des artistes." He signals his chauffeur to open the door for her. Maybe because Leni sees a chance to help Michelle, or maybe because Leni wants to know what kind of a man is hidden inside this enemy invader -- she decides to join him for the evening.

Leni descends the stairs. Werner offers his hand.

WERNER
Madame.

With a haughty glance, she enters his limousine.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni and Werner lift champagne glasses. Their eyes meet.

WERNER
(clicks glasses)
To a great artiste.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS STREET -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Michelle walks along a dark neighborhood street.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Michelle hurries to meet her secret love. But dark forces have already decided the fate of this sweet girl. This girl from the French Resistance in love with a German Lieutenant. Because ...

The Clubfoot and his Flunky watch her hurry past their parked truck.

CLUBFOOT
Her time is up.

FLUNKY
(grips hearing aid)
What?

Michelle approaches an elegant apartment building.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Because ... love is a luxury a spy cannot afford.

She calls up to the balcony.

MICHELLE
Hanschen!

The German Lieutenant appears on the balcony, smiles and tosses down his key. It lands in the street.

Michelle stoops down to pick it up. Suddenly the truck hurtles toward her at full speed. Turning in horror, she sees the Clubfoot at the wheel.

The truck races into the night, leaving Michelle sprawled across the dark pavement.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin is deep in thought. Molina approaches and snaps his fingers.

MOLINA
Valentin, are you listening?
(pause)
How can you leave me chattering to myself like some silly parrot?

VALENTIN
Strange. When Michelle was killed, I -- it was chilling.

Molina, touched by the compliment, sits on the floor beside his bunk.

MOLINA
It's just a movie, Valentin. One of Mother's many stories.

VALENTIN
Yeah, but I keep thinking about -- someone I know.

MOLINA
Your girlfriend. Tell me about her. My lips are sealed.

VALENTIN
It's just that I'm so helpless in here, with no way to protect her.

MOLINA
So you have a heart after all.

VALENTIN
Mm.

MOLINA
Write to her. Tell her to stop taking chances.

Valentin snaps out of his reverie.

VALENTIN
If you think like that, you'll never change anything in this world.

MOLINA
(amused)
Now look who's living a fantasy.

Valentin angrily lifts his shirt, displaying the torture welts on his torso.

VALENTIN
You call this a fantasy?

MOLINA
-- I'm so sorry.

VALENTIN
Some day the struggle will be won.

MOLINA
Don't worry, Valentin. You'll have your day, I'm sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON CORRIDOR -- DAY

Both men stand outside their door for morning bed-check.

VALENTIN
Valentin Arregui.

MOLINA
Luis Molina.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina leans on his bunk, humming Leni's song. Valentin paces for exercise. Two tin plates are pushed through the food slot in the door.

VALENTIN
Great. I'm starving. -- Here.

MOLINA
No, you take this one. It has twice as much.

VALENTIN
Sure, because those bastards want us to fight over it. Take it.

MOLINA
No, you need it more than I do. Please, please, to build your strength.

VALENTIN
Don't argue. Take it.

Molina reluctantly accepts the larger portion.

MOLINA
(snide)
May I have a spoon?
(Valentin obliges)
Thanks.

Valentin sits on his bunk and eats the black beans, then notices Molina toying with his food.

VALENTIN
What's the matter? Afraid of getting fat?

MOLINA
No.

VALENTIN
This glue is not so bad today.

Molina hesitantly swallows another spoonful.

MOLINA
Valentin.
(pause)
When I said you should write your girlfriend, I also meant you should tell her you love her. It's so nice to get a letter from someone you love.

VALENTIN
Are you crazy? A letter would be like denouncing her to them. The only reason I'm still alive is because they want information from me. And if anyone tries to save me, they'd hide my arrest by killing me on the spot.

MOLINA
(upset)
Valentin, please don't say things like that.

VALENTIN
The same thing could be happening to her. Right now.

MOLINA
(melancholy)
You love her very much, don't you. Love should always come first.

VALENTIN
That's great.
(turns away)
Now I'd like to eat in peace.

MOLINA
Don't worry, I won't disturb you.

Molina bursts into muffled sobs.

VALENTIN
(annoyed)
What is it now?

MOLINA
(weepy moans)
It's my mother. She must really be in bad shape or she'd come visit me with groceries. This happened once before.

VALENTIN
(cold)
Sorry to hear that.

Molina moans more. Valentin keeps eating and tries to ignore him. Molina moans louder, then says:

MOLINA
Yeah, well, I told you she was sick, but of course you weren't paying any attention.
(pause)
But that's not what I'm crying about.

VALENTIN
(very annoyed)
So what is it, for Chrissake?

MOLINA
(wipes tears)
Because it's so beautiful when lovers are together for a lifetime. Why is it so impossible?

VALENTIN
You gotta be crazy, crying about something like that.

MOLINA
I will cry about whatever I want to.
(stops crying)
Valentin, do you think you're the only one who's suffered? You think it's easy to find a real man? One who's humble, and yet has dignity?
(pause)
How many years have I been searching? How many nights? How many faces filled with scorn and deceit?

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE WINDOW -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

The window contains two mannequins dressed as bride and groom. Molina meticulously adjusts the fluffy bridal gown.

VOICE OF MOLINA
You know, working as a window dresser, enjoyable as it is, sometimes at the end of the day you wonder what it's all about. And you feel kind of empty inside.
(pause)
Then, one night....

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Molina takes a table with two effeminate friends. One is black. The other is GRETA, 31, babbling with chit-chat.

GRETA
It's something new she just invented herself. She calls it La Chika-Chaka and she goes chika-chaka, chika-chaka. And she's an overnight sensation, the next day she's in all newspapers, and her husband becomes so jealous because he thinks --.

Molina's eyes are riveted on GABRIEL, 34, a handsome waiter in a white tunic.

GABRIEL
Good evening, gentlemen. Would you care for the daily special? Or would you like to order a la carte?

MOLINA
I haven't decided yet.

Gabriel offers a menu and leaves.

VOICE OF MOLINA
My heart was pounding... so afraid that I would be hurt once again.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Molina sits alone, impeccably dressed, immaculately groomed.

GABRIEL
Are you ready for me, sir?

MOLINA
What do you suggest?

GABRIEL
Perhaps the lasagna and antipasto.

MOLINA
Don't you think the lasagna might be fattening?

GABRIEL
Then perhaps the steak and onion soup.

MOLINA
(returning menu)
Sounds wonderful.

Gabriel goes to place the order. Molina can't take his eyes off him.

VOICE OF MOLINA
His white tunic, the way he moved, his sad smile. Everything seemed so perfect, like in the movies.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The restaurant is closed. Gabriel mops the floor. The only customer is Molina, still in his chair, waiting.

VOICE OF MOLINA
You have no idea how much trouble I went through, month after month, just to get him to go for a walk. But little by little I made him see I respected him.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina sits on the floor, hugging his knees.

MOLINA
Anyway, after more than a year, we finally became friends.

VALENTIN
Jesus, did it take another year to get him in the sack?

MOLINA
Are you out of your mind? Nothing at all happened. Ever!

VALENTIN
You gotta be kidding.

MOLINA
Don't you know anything at all? He's straight. He's married. I said to him, let's do it just once. But he never wanted to.

VALENTIN
I don't believe this. Here I am, staying up all night, thinking about your boyfriend.
(pause)
Sounds like a real bind, Molina. All you can do is take it like a man.

MOLINA
I take it like a woman. Always. That's why I want a husband who's the boss.

Molina stretches across the floor toward Valentin's bunk. Valentin awkwardly changes the subject.

VALENTIN
Uh, did you ever meet his wife?

MOLINA
No, but when they were on the verge of splitting up -- God, such illusions I had.

VALENTIN
Like what?

MOLINA
That he might come home to live with me, with my mother and me. And I would take care of him and help him lose that sadness of his forever.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR DISTRICT -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Molina and Gabriel stroll up the narrow street. Most the garish bars are dark. Male and female HOOKERS stand in shadowy doorways.

GABRIEL
(shrugs)
That's life, Molina.

MOLINA
No, it's a shame. With your looks and charm, you should work in a chic restaurant in a luxury hotel. Making three times what you get in that stinkhole.

GABRIEL
It's not so easy.

MOLINA
I know someone who works in a big hotel on the Coast. He could talk to the manager and presto, a new life.

GABRIEL
And be what, a busboy in a snob joint? I'd make less money than now.

MOLINA
I could help you with a loan. With your poise, you'd be a waiter in six months.

GABRIEL
I don't know.

MOLINA
Of course you do. And in a year, a maitre'd. In a tuxedo! You could pay me back in no time.

GABRIEL
Maybe. Anyway I appreciate your offer. I'll think about it.
(leaving)
I gotta get my bus, I'm gonna be late. See you tomorrow, Molina.

MOLINA
Goodnight, Gabriel. Kiss the children for me.

Molina watches the bus leave, then heads back down the dark street toward the male hookers. A teenage BOY asks for a light. Molina responds and they walk off together.

VOICE OF MOLINA
And then it's over... again... my dreams disappear... into the darkness. And I wake up alone.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina, stretched out on the floor, looks up at Valentin.

MOLINA
Waiting as always. Waiting and waiting. Waiting and waiting and waiting.

VALENTIN
Waiting for what?

MOLINA
A man. A real man. But that can't happen because a real man, what he wants is a real woman.

VALENTIN
(stands up)
Can I ask you a question? What is a real man in your terms?

MOLINA
Well, to be marvelous looking and strong. Without making any fuss about it. And walking very tall. Like my waiter.

VALENTIN
He just gives you that impression, but inside it's another story. In this society, without power behind you, no one walks tall.

MOLINA
Don't be jealous.

VALENTIN
Don't be stupid.

MOLINA
You see how you react? There's just no talking about a guy with another guy without getting into a fuss.

VALENTIN
(hard)
Look, just keep it on a certain level, okay? Or let's not talk at all.

MOLINA
Okay, you tell me what a real man is?

VALENTIN
(caught off-guard)
I don't know.

MOLINA
Sure you do. Go ahead, tell me.

VALENTIN
Well, not taking any crap from anyone, not even the powers-that-be. That's not the most important thing, what really makes a man has to do with not humiliating anybody. It's not letting the people around you feel degraded.

MOLINA
That sounds like a saint.

VALENTIN
Forget it.

Molina suddenly grabs his stomach and doubles over, groaning in pain.

VALENTIN
What's wrong?

MOLINA
(drops to floor)
-- My stomach.

VALENTIN
Maybe it's your appendix?

MOLINA
No, I had mine out.
(grimacing)
God, it hurts, it hurts!

VALENTIN
You feel like throwing up?

MOLINA
No, it's below there. It's in my guts.

Valentin pulls Molina to his feet and helps him hobble to his bunk.

VALENTIN
The food didn't do anything to me.

MOLINA
(lays down)
I don't know, maybe it's my ulcer.
(writhing in pain)
I -- I don't like this!

VALENTIN
Why don't you go on with your movie?

MOLINA
God, I never felt a pain like this.

VALENTIN
Go ahead and tell it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LENI'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni stands at her window, waving goodbye to Werner in his limousine.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Leni lingers at the window, so sad, so alone, so afraid that she will fall in love.

Suddenly a hand reaches from the shadows and muffles her scream. It's the half-deaf Flunky.

CUT TO:

INT. LENI'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The Flunky flings Leni onto a sofa. She sees the Clubfoot in her armchair.

CLUBFOOT
Tonight the invaders murdered your friend Michelle.

LENI
(shocked)
No.

CLUBFOOT
You must complete her mission and find the secret map to the German arsenal. The Chief of Counter-Intelligence is in love with you.

LENI
I could never get involved with such a thing.

CLUBFOOT
(approaching)
Nonsense, nothing could be safer. Do you love France?

LENI
Of course I do.

CLUBFOOT
That Kraut can't keep his hands off you. Next time he touches you like this --
(fondling her)
-- and like this, think of your country. And get the map.

Leni has grasped a statuette of "Justice". She hammers his skull and dashes out the door. The Clubfoot tumbles to the carpet and shouts at his Flunky.

CLUBFOOT
Stop her, you idiot!

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS STREET -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni runs across dark cobblestones, turns a corner and sees a taxi in the distance.

LENI
Taxi! Taxi!

The bleeding Clubfoot lumbers around the corner.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Leni, desperate, runs along this dark empty street. The furious Clubfoot hobbles after her, when suddenly --

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina, hunched over the edge of his bed, clutches his stomach and whispers:

MOLINA
-- this girl is finished.

VALENTIN
What girl?

MOLINA
Me, stupid.

Molina, passing out, slumps onto the floor. Valentin pounds the cell door.

VALENTIN
Guard! GUARD!

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INFIRMARY -- NIGHT

Molina sleeps on an infirmary cot.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin looks under Molina's bunk and finds his crucifix neck-chain. He places the gold chain on Molina's pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INFIRMARY -- DAY

Molina, in bed, reaches for his missing crucifix and looks up at the prison DOCTOR.

DOCTOR
You're strong enough to go back to your cell. Your diarrhea will stop tomorrow. Till then, no food. Only water. Clean water. If you can find it.

MOLINA
Doctor, I need to see the Warden. Right away.

DOCTOR
(leaving)
That's what they all say.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin does pushups on the floor. Molina pages through glamor magazines on his bunk.

VALENTIN
I don't understand how you can pass out from an ulcer.

MOLINA
I'm no spring chicken, darling. I'm getting dizzy just looking at these pictures.

Molina sighs for attention. Valentin says nothing.

MOLINA
God, wouldn't it be wonderful if you told me a movie for a change. One that I haven't seen.

VALENTIN
I don't remember any.

MOLINA
Don't be like that. Come on, tell me one.
(pause)
Please.

VALENTIN
Don't be such a cry-baby.

MOLINA
Valentin. Have you ever loved someone you didn't want to love?

VALENTIN
(wary)
What do you mean?

MOLINA
Leni didn't want to fall in love with Werner, but what could she do? She steps through his doorway like a goddess. Her slim graceful figure trembles at the sight of Werner descending the marble staircase. Their eyes meet. Leni says.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner descends his marble stairs. Leni stands beside the BUTLER in the vestibule.

LENI
My best friend has been killed. I need a place to stay.

WERNER
(to butler)
Prepare the guest room.

LENI
This music is magical. I feel like I'm floating on air.

Wagnerian music fills the baroque chateau. Werner leads Leni inside.

VOICE OF MOLINA
But her heart is saying, Oh Werner, you seem like a god, but your tears --

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina savors his sad reverie.

MOLINA
-- your tears are proof you have the feelings of a man.

VALENTIN
Quiet! I can't hear.

Valentin peers through the wall plate and SEES two Guards returning the Hooded Prisoner in blood-stained underpants. His skin is covered with welts and burns.

Valentin bangs the door with his metal cup.

VALENTIN
Murderers! Fascist murderers. Fascist murderers!

More prisoners join the protest. The guards use clubs to crush the outbreak.

Valentin sees a guard's shoes facing his cell. Suddenly a stream of urine splashes onto Valentin. SOUND of guards laughing.

VALENTIN
Motherfucker. Motherfucker!

MOLINA
I'll clean it up.

Valentin, furious, spins around and hurls his metal cup at Molina's head. Molina ducks. Valentin stalks forward.

VALENTIN
You son of a bitch! They're killing one of my brothers and what am I doing? Listening to your fucking Nazi movie!

Molina clutches his ragdoll to his chest.

VALENTIN
Don't you know what the Nazis did to people -- Jews, Marxists, Catholics? Homosexuals!

MOLINA
Of course I know. What do you take me for, an even dumber broad than I am?

Valentin grabs Molina and hurls him head-first across the cell, then fires the doll at his face. Molina cowers on the floor. Valentin clenches his fist and approaches.

VALENTIN
You don't know shit. You wouldn't know reality if it was suck up your ass.

MOLINA
(terrified)
Why should I think about reality in a stinkhole like this? Why should I get more depressed than I already am?

Molina shrinks back into the corner. Valentin, seething, kneels down and rips off Molina's earrings.

VALENTIN
You're worse than I thought. You just use these movies to jerk yourself off.

MOLINA
(bursts into tears)
If you don't stop, I will never speak to you again.

VALENTIN
Stop crying! You sound just like an old woman.

MOLINA
(sobbing)
That's what I am, that's what I am.

Molina looks down, whimpering. Valentin violently wrenches apart Molina's knees.

VALENTIN
What's this between your legs? Huh? Tell me, "lady"!

MOLINA
It's an accident. If I had the courage, I'd cut it off.

Molina struggles to regain his dignity. Valentin moves in for the kill.

VALENTIN
You'd still be a man! A man in prison, just like the faggots the Nazis shoved in the ovens.

MOLINA
(pleading)
Don't. Don't look at me like that.

Molina, sobbing, looks up at the barred window.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Molina stands beside his LAWYER, facing the massive oak desk. The JUDGE glowers down at him.

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JUDGE
...Luis Alberto Molina. You shall endure the full weight of the law and not one day less. You will be confined without chance of parole for a period of not less than eight years.

Molina turns from the Judge to gaze forlornly at his MOTHER. She pulls a handkerchief from her purse. As their eyes meet, she smiles warmly through her tears.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Poor Mama. Her eyes full of tears as if someone had died. A life full of humiliation and then the humiliation of a son steeped in vice, but she never gave me that black look. Her heart broken by too much suffering, too much forgiving. Because of me she could die.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina's red eyes are stark and determined.

MOLINA
If he ever says one unkind word about her, I'll strangle the son of a bitch. Him and his filthy words and his piss-ass revolution.

Lightning flashes through the barred window.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Two plates are shoved through the food slot. Molina, still angry, plops one on Valentin's bunk and goes to eat by the window. Lightning flashes.

Suddenly Valentin clutches his stomach and groans in pain. Molina rushes to his side.

VALENTIN
My stomach. It's like a bomb exploding.

MOLINA
The same thing I had.

VALENTIN
(grimacing)
I think it's the food.

MOLINA
You gotta go to the Infirmary right now. -- Guard!

Molina hurries to the door. Valentin lunges forward and grabs him.

VALENTIN
No! Wait. Stop.

MOLINA
Why?

VALENTIN
I'm a political prisoner.

MOLINA
Don't be ridiculous. This is no time for your damn discipline.

VALENTIN
Get away from the door.

MOLINA
They gave me a shot, and I'm better already.

VALENTIN
Are you crazy? That's just what they want. They get me hooked on those shots, and I'll tell them everything.

MOLINA
What can we do?

Valentin, groaning, returns to his bunk and mutters:

VALENTIN
Leave me alone.

Molina thinks, then gets a scarf and says:

MOLINA
What about my movie? It might help you forget the pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni and Werner slowly waltz among billowing white curtains.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Later that night, on the moonlit veranda, Leni feels so safe, so secure in Werner's arms.
(music stops)
Even when the phonograph stops, they continue dancing... dancing.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina dances with the scarf as if his empty arms held Werner.

MOLINA
To the music of the evening breezes, whooh, whoooh.

Molina sees Valentin shivering in his sleep, drenched with sweat. He kneels down and wipes Valentin's fevered forehead with the scarf.

VALENTIN
(asleep)
Marta ... Marta.
(opens eyes)
... who are you?

MOLINA
It's okay. Try to rest.

Valentin closes his weary eyes. Molina tenderly adjusts the blanket.

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Both men are eating. Molina watches Valentin reading a letter.

MOLINA
You shouldn't eat this garbage while you're sick.

VALENTIN
(keeps eating)
I have to get my strength back.

MOLINA
It'll only make you worse.

VALENTIN
Tastes like dog piss.

MOLINA
(shakes his head)
My poor little Valentina.

VALENTIN
Don't call me Valentina. I'm not a woman.

MOLINA
(leans forward)
Well, I've never seen proof to the contrary.

VALENTIN
And you never will.

MOLINA
Now, the Clubfoot told --.

Valentin grimaces in disgust.

MOLINA
You'll like this part, wait and see.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S BEDROOM -- DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni wakes in a lavish antique bed, reaches for Werner and discovers he is gone.

VOICE OF MOLINA
The Clubfoot told Leni that her sweet lover was ordering the execution of her countrymen everyday. But she refused to believe it. She only wanted to live this love, to feel his touch, to hear his voice.

The phone rings. Leni eavesdrops on Werner.

WERNER'S VOICE
It's a difficult decision.

CALLER'S VOICE
Ja, Herr Commandant.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S STUDY -- DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

Werner, in uniform, stands at a desk piled with documents.

CALLER'S VOICE
We captured ten of them. They're all French, but their activities prove they are enemies of the people.

WERNER
They call themselves patriots, but in fact they are common criminals.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S BEDROOM -- DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni sits up in shock.

WERNER'S VOICE
Let the execution take place at dawn.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina looks at his fingers.

MOLINA
Her fingers tremble with the agony of betraying the man she loves.

Valentin suddenly curls up with pain.

VALENTIN
It's like a nail in my gut.
(pause)
That's better. Do me a favor and stop all this crap about beautiful women in tears.

Molina goes to the corner for coconut shells and returns, clutching them to his chest under his robe.

MOLINA
Leni's heart was beating so fast that her swelling breasts lept out of her low-cut gown. Like luscious hors d'oeuvres on a silver platter.

Valentin chokes with laughter.

VALENTIN
Don't make me laugh. It hurts.

Molina opens his robe, revealing the coconut-shell breasts.

MOLINA
Here, have a nice juicy tit. Have another. The best places serve them in pairs.

Valentin laughs out loud. Suddenly, his eyes snap open in pain. Trying to sit up, he clutches his pants and points to the shit-bucket.

VALENTIN
The bucket! Quick!

Molina dashes to the bucket. Valentin struggles to his feet and tugs his zipper. Diarrhea fills his trousers. Valentin collapses on the floor, covering his face in shame.

VALENTIN
Oh, no.

MOLINA
Christ, what a smell.

VALENTIN
(groaning)
I'm sorry. You don't know how much it hurts.

MOLINA
Let it all out. It can't smell any worse than it already does.

VALENTIN
God, I can't stand this.

Valentin trembles on the floor. Molina pulls the sheet from his own bed and grabs some rags.

MOLINA
You've been through worse. Much worse.

VALENTIN
I'm so ashamed.

MOLINA
Aren't you the one always saying take it like a man? So what's this business about being embarrassed?

VALENTIN
I can't stand it. I can't stand myself like this.

Valentin lifts his hand to hide his tears. Molina kneels down with maternal concern.

MOLINA
Take off your pants. Cover yourself with this. Why do you always have to pick on yourself so much?

Molina tosses the soiled trousers and underpants beside the bucket, then grabs the rags.

MOLINA
Wipe yourself off.

VALENTIN
No, it's yours.

MOLINA
No, it's ours. Wipe yourself. There's a little more here, and here.

Valentin struggles to remove the glop from his buttocks. Molina wipes the brown liquid from his ankles.

Despondent, Valentin gives up. Molina, taking over, cleans his thighs and buttocks like a mother cleaning a child.

VALENTIN
(turning away)
Jesus, aren't you disgusted?

MOLINA
No, it breaks my heart to see you like this. There, almost finished. Good. Now take off your shirt.

VALENTIN
No, it's alright.

MOLINA
The shirt-tails are soiled.
Please.

Valentin removes his shirt. Tossing it, Molina feels a letter in the pocket and keeps it.

MOLINA
Okay, now try and stand up.

Molina, tenderly insistent, helps him to his feet and puts the bedsheet around his shoulders.

VALENTIN
No, it'll stink.

MOLINA
My weekly shower is tomorrow.
I'll have it all clean by noon.
There we go. All wrapped up like
a little papoose.

Molina wraps the bedsheet around him like a toga and helps him crawl back in bed.

VALENTIN
It doesn't disgust you?

MOLINA
Lie down. Don't want you to catch
a chill. What a shame I have no
talcum left. Are you comfortable
now?

VALENTIN
Yes, but I'm so cold.

MOLINA
I'll make you a nice hot cup of
tea.

Valentin, deeply touched, watches him pour a cup.

MOLINA
This will work wonders.
(hands cup)
It's hot, you'll burn yourself.

Valentin takes a sip.

VALENTIN
You're very kind, honestly, I don't know what to say.

MOLINA
Don't burn yourself.

Molina finishes cleaning the floor, then pulls out the hidden letter.

MOLINA
Oh, uh, this fell out of your shirt.

VALENTIN
Go ahead, read it. I know you've been curious.

MOLINA
No, I only read love letters. I don't want to know anything about your politics.

VALENTIN
It's from my girlfriend. Her name is Lydia.

MOLINA
-- What about Marta?

VALENTIN
(bolts upright)
How do you know about Marta?

MOLINA
You mumbled her name in your sleep.

VALENTIN
(worried)
What else did I mumble?

MOLINA
Nothing.

VALENTIN
The letter's from Lydia. She's my girlfriend in the movement.

Molina opens the pages and scans the letter.

MOLINA
Her handwriting is like a child's.

VALENTIN
-- She hasn't had much of an education.

Valentin lays back down with a sigh.

VALENTIN
I'm going to tell you the truth. During torture, whenever I felt close to death, it was Marta I would think about, and she would save me. My whole body ached to hold her.

MOLINA
What's she like?

VALENTIN
She's upper-class. Pure bourgeoisie. She's got everything. Money, looks, education, freedom. I'm such a hypocrite. Just like all those class-conscious pigs.
(pause)
I must admit it was convenient, a safe place to stay when I was forced to hide. Until one day I had to tell her about my other life.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

MARTA, 29, puts out a cigarette and listens.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
She just listened in silence like she knew already. Then she asked me to leave the movement. But how could I do nothing when my friends were disappearing every day? I sensed that she was right but I had no choice. So once again I didn't know what to say.

Marta steps onto the balcony and looks at the city. Her strong eyes brim with tears. Valentin approaches.

VALENTIN
Things are what they are. I'll be back in a few days. Same as always.

MARTA
I can't take it any more. Always waiting, watching the phone. Always alone.

Valentin brushes back her long black hair and kisses her cheek. She makes no response. He turns to leave.

MARTA
(fights back tears)
Valentin. If you leave, don't come back. Please, don't come back.

Valentin hesitates, then leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Valentin, deep in thought, stares out the train window at the passing slums.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
I no longer believed in violence, but I had to do something. As a journalist, I was always hearing about the illegal arrests and secret torture, then leaking this information abroad.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

The train pulls into a station. Valentin steps onto the platform.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
My assignment was to meet one of the last surviving members of the original movement. His code name was Americo. He needed my passport to leave the country.

Valentin approaches an old man. AMERICO, 62, walks with a cane toward a railing. Valentin stops beside him.

VALENTIN
Are you all right?

AMERICO
A little tired.

VALENTIN
You should have left long ago, Doctor Americo.

AMERICO
(points down)
This is where I'm needed.

VALENTIN
I keep wondering if it's all worth it -- when nothing really changes.

Valentin tugs the passport from his pocket and slides it along the railing.

VALENTIN
Well, good luck. Here's your passport. Take care of yourself.

AMERICO
Thank you.

Americo walks away. Valentin stays at the railing.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
He had accomplished almost nothing, but I was glad I could help him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATION ENTRANCE -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Reaching street level, Valentin steps off the escalator and enters the turnstyle. Suddenly THREE PLAIN-CLOTHES AGENTS surround him with guns.

Their burly leader, PEDRO, 44, black, spins Valentin around and jams an automatic pistol in the back of his head.

PEDRO
Freeze! Stop!
(frisks him)
Open your legs.
(handcuffs him)
Move!

Pedro shoves Valentin toward a black car.

VOICE OF MOLINA
What happened to Marta?

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin, tormented, lays on his bunk in the sheet. Molina sits at the foot of the bed.

VALENTIN
I don't know anything for sure. Except that I'll never see her again.

MOLINA
Don't say that.

VALENTIN
(writhing)
I don't deserve to die in this cell. I only confessed some code names they already knew. I can't stand being a martyr, it infuriates me. I don't want to be a martyr.
(deeply depressed)
My whole life... a mistake.

MOLINA
No.

Valentin, fighting despair, extends his hand.

VALENTIN
Give me your hand.

Molina grips his hand tightly. Valentin whispers:

VALENTIN
I don't want to die, Molina. I don't want to die. Don't let me die.

MOLINA
(grips tighter)
Of course not.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE -- DAY

The WARDEN, 60, gray-haired in a business suit, leans forward at his large desk.

WARDEN
You look thin, Molina, what's the matter?

MOLINA
It's nothing, sir. I was sick, but I'm better now.

WARDEN
So stop trembling. There's nothing to be afraid of.
(pause)
Arregui doesn't suspect anything, does he?

MOLINA
No, sir.

WARDEN
What has he told you?

MOLINA
Uhh. Nothing yet. He, uh, I feel I should proceed very cautiously.

Stepping from the adjoining bathroom is Pedro, the Secret Agent who arrested Valentin. Wearing a three-piece suit, he adjusts his tie and measures Molina with ice-cold eyes.

PEDRO
Molina, you are lying. What are you hiding?

MOLINA
Nothing.
(to Warden)
How can you accuse me when I almost died for you? He insisted I eat the bowl with the poison.

The Warden pushes back from his desk and rolls around front in a wheelchair.

WARDEN
Why? You made a mistake there.

MOLINA
One plate had twice as much as the other one, so he insisted I eat the larger portion. Sir, you told me the poisoned food would be in a new tin plate, but they loaded it up so much I had no choice. I had to eat it myself, or he would've become suspicious.

WARDEN
Poor Molina. I'm sorry for the mix-up. I commend you. Sit down here. Please.

Molina takes a seat. The Warden wheels closer, treating him like a child.

WARDEN
Your mother's feeling much better since she learned you may be paroled.

MOLINA
Really?

WARDEN
Of course. So stop crying. You should be pleased.

MOLINA
It's from happiness, sir.

Pedro takes the chair beside Molina and says curtly:

PEDRO
What did Valentin say about his cadre?

MOLINA
(puzzled)
His what?

PEDRO
His group -- who they are, where they meet.

MOLINA
Nothing, sir. He is very sick. If he has anymore poison, I don't know <u>what</u> will happen.

PEDRO
His girlfriend, what'd he say about her?

MOLINA
He says personal things are secondary to revolution, he thinks everything else is trash, so I think he's warming up to talking about it.

The Warden hands him a cup of coffee.

MOLINA
For me? Thank you.

PEDRO
What did he say about the new prisoner? The one across the hall.

MOLINA
The one who's all messed up? He said that no crime justifies that kind of punishment.
(takes a sip)
This coffee really hits the spot.

PEDRO
Did he tell you his name?

MOLINA
(puzzled)
Of course, sir. It's Valentin Arregui.

PEDRO
No, you idiot! The name of the new prisoner.

MOLINA
(frightened)
Of course not. He's always wearing a hood.

Pedro, furious, glances at the Warden.

PEDRO
Who put a hood on him?

WARDEN
(worried)
It's routine. He's political.

PEDRO
How do you expect him to talk if he can't even see the bastard's face?

WARDEN
It won't happen again.

Pedro looks at his "female" prisoner. He's not sure if this "actress" is really naive -- or just pretending.

PEDRO
Molina, we gotta know everything they're planning.
(pause)
As soon as he sees that new prisoner's face, he'll spill his guts. Remember every damn word he says.

MOLINA
Yes, sir.

PEDRO
The quicker he talks, the quicker you get out. Now get back to work.

Molina stands up to leave, then hesitates.

MOLINA
Uh, Warden, one more thing. He heard the guard say my mother was coming. And I told him that, uh, she always brings me a bag full of groceries. I don't want him to get suspicious.

WARDEN
Okay, dictate what she brings.

MOLINA
To you, sir?

WARDEN
Yes, to me! And make it quick. I'm busy.

MOLINA
Um. Two roast chickens in butter, egg salad, canned peaches, condensed milk. Two boxes of tea -- one regular, one camomile. A jar of pickled herring, four bars of toilet soap. What else?

Pedro, disgusted, watches the Warden write it down. Molina nervously taps his teeth, watching from the corner of his eye, pushing them to the limit.

MOLINA
Blessed Mary, my mind's a blank. Let me think. Rye bread. Sugar, I need. Uhh.

The Warden, exasperated, eyes the ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Valentin struggles to sit up in bed. Molina, victorious, unpacks two bags of groceries.

MOLINA
Roast chickens! Canned peaches! Cheddar cheese! Rye bread!

VALENTIN
What happened?

MOLINA
Look at this. Two roast chickens, two! How about that. Just watch how fast you get better now.

VALENTIN
Your mother came.

MOLINA
Yes! Tea, sugar, and --
(proud chuckle)
cigarettes.

VALENTIN
That's great. How is she?

MOLINA
Oh, she's much better, thank you. And look at all she brought me. I mean us.

VALENTIN
Well, really that's all meant for you.

MOLINA
No, you have to stop eating that damn prison chow, and you'll feel better in no time.

VALENTIN
You think so?

MOLINA
You're damn right I do. Starting today a new life begins. Oh, I took a chance and left the sheets out to dry, and no one walked away with them. So tonight we both have clean sheets.

He tosses the sheets. Valentin catches them and smiles.

VALENTIN
Nice going.

MOLINA
(lights the burner)
Let me get this started and presto, in a few minutes you'll be licking your fingers. I expect you to eat all of those chickens, both of them.

VALENTIN
But what about you? I'm not gonna let you just sit around and drool.

MOLINA
No, I've gotta keep an eye on my girlish figure. At least what's left of it.

Valentin reaches for the peaches. Molina slaps his hand.

MOLINA
Not yet, that's for dessert.

TIME CUT:

Spread across the floor is a picnic blanket of leftovers. Valentin relaxes with a cigarette. Molina stretches.

MOLINA
Would you like some more peaches?

VALENTIN
No thanks. I'm stuffed.
(rubs stomach)
Good food, good cigarette. I don't remember when I felt so good. There's only one thing missing.

MOLINA
Christ! And I thought I was supposed to be the one who's the degenerate around here.

VALENTIN
(laughs)
No, I mean a good movie.

MOLINA
Of course! Jeez, why didn't I think of that?

VALENTIN
Your Nazi movie, how does it end?

MOLINA
I thought you hated it.

VALENTIN
Yeah, but I'm curious to see how it turns out.

MOLINA
(stands up)
Well, let's see.

CUT TO:

INT. WERNER'S DINING ROOM -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni and Werner sit at a magnificent table.

VOICE OF MOLINA
They are dining at the majestic table in Werner's chateau. As Werner begins to notice Leni's cold distance, she suddenly --

Leni stands up with a crystal goblet. INSERT: In the cell, Molina flings his tin cup at the wall. In the chateau, his tin cup turns into her crystal goblet.

VOICE OF MOLINA
-- impulsively, hurls her wine glass across the room and says.

LENI
I refuse to love a man who is the butcher of my country.

WERNER
(stands up)
Oh, my love. Come with me and you'll understand.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina and Valentin sit side-by-side against the wall. In the fading daylight, Molina spins his delicate web.

MOLINA
Werner takes her to this government archive, filled with photos and documents about famine throughout the world.

CUT TO:

INT. PROJECTION ROOM -- DAY (NAZI MOVIE)

Slides show the tragedy of famine. Leni wipes a teardrop.

VOICE OF MOLINA
He shows her how the elite create false shortages to enslave the masses. Leni is deeply moved and begins to see things through Werner's eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOVERNMENT ARCHIVE -- DAY

Leni and Werner walk arm-in-arm along a corridor of columns.

VOICE OF MOLINA
From that moment on, Leni understood Werner's mission. To liberate humanity from injustice and domination. As they leave the baroque archive, Leni feels the anguish in her heart being transformed back to her previous admiration, but this time with the depth of a love reborn.

Leni stops on the balustrade and looks into his eyes.

LENI
My love, how could I ever have doubted you.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

In the darkened cell Molina quietly says:

MOLINA
She begs him to forgive her and promises to help ensnare his enemies.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The Flunky drives an old sedan with Leni in the backseat.

VOICE OF MOLINA
She arranges this secret meeting with the head of the Resistance by telling him that she will give the map -- remember the map? -- only to him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

The sedan stops beside a dark castle. Leni runs up the stone steps and enters an underground tunnel. The Flunky waits at the entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Leni enters an underground chamber and sees the Resistance LEADER in the shadows.

LENI
(offers map)
I believe this is what you want.

LEADER
Yes, well done. So often I was tempted to steal it from him myself. But some things are best done by a woman. A woman who betrays the man she loves.

The Leader steps from the shadows with a lecherous grin.

LEADER
And there is something else I have wanted almost as much as the map.

LENI
What?

Taking the map, the Leader backs Leni against the wall and nuzzles her neck.

LEADER
You know very well. I've prepared a lavish banquet for two.

LENI
I'm not hungry.

LEADER
I am. For you.

He paws her. Leni, struggling, spots a steak knife on the banquet table. Pretending to submit, she maneuvers him sideways and grabs the knife.

Kissing him, she plunges the blade in his back. The Leader moans and topples to the floor.

Leni grabs the map and dashes into the dark tunnel.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE -- NIGHT (NAZI MOVIE)

Rushing outside, Leni is grabbed by the Flunky. She elbows his throat and starts down the stone stairs.

He pulls a handgun and aims at her but, suddenly, is shot in the chest and drops to the ground.

Werner stands at the foot of the stairway with a smoking pistol. Leni, smiling, rushes into his embrace and kisses him.

The dying Flunky raises his gun and fires. Leni slumps back and dies in Werner's arms.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Werner hears her sing. She sings like never before. She sings of her eternal love for him and --

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

They sit side-by-side in the dark. Valentin is wrapped in his blanket. Molina is rapt in his web.

MOLINA
-- begs him not to cry, because her sacrifice was not in vain.
(sighs)
The End.
(pause)
What did you think?

VALENTIN
(shrugs)
You told it well. Next time tell one I like.

MOLINA
Come off it, the love story was divine. Forget about the rest. It's so perfect when Leni --.
(corridor noise)
What's going on?
(Valentin jumps up)
What is it?

Valentin peers through the wall plate and SEES two guards dragging the Hooded Prisoner to his cell. He has no hood.

VALENTIN
(stunned)
That guy is Americo.

MOLINA
Who?

VALENTIN
The man with my passport.
(looks down)
They don't know he's here.

MOLINA
Who doesn't know?

Valentin, depressed, turns to the wall.

MOLINA
Please, Valentin. Maybe I can help.

Valentin says nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD -- DAY

A prison WORK CREW cleans out Americo's empty cell. They toss his bloody shirt in a trash can.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina watches through the wall plate, then hears Valentin waking up.

MOLINA
Good morning. Did you sleep well?

VALENTIN
(glances down)
Turn the other way, will you?

MOLINA
Why?

VALENTIN
Because you'll laugh.

MOLINA
At what?

VALENTIN
Something on any healthy man, that's all.

MOLINA
A hard-on. Well, that <u>is</u> healthy.
(turns away)
Should I close my eyes too?

Valentin grins and wraps a towel around his waist.

VALENTIN
Hey, I missed breakfast. Why didn't you wake me?

MOLINA
I told the guard not to bring anything as long as our food holds out.

VALENTIN
Dammit, Molina, stop running my life for me.

Molina nods an apology. Valentin moves toward the crack in the wall plate.

MOLINA
They already took him away. I didn't want to wake you. The water's almost hot if you want some tea.

Valentin stares at dead Americo's cell. Molina unwraps some baked goods.

MOLINA
Have some cake.

VALENTIN
You eat it.

MOLINA
(offers cake)
Come on, let me spoil you a little bit.

VALENTIN
(turns, glares)
Back off, Molina.

MOLINA
It's not my fault they killed your friend.

VALENTIN
Shut up!
(slaps cake)
You damn faggot!

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON CORRIDOR -- DAY

Two guards escort Molina across the courtyard and open his cell door. He carries two new bags of groceries.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina puts down the bags and pulls out a red heart-shaped box of candy.

MOLINA
Look at the wonderful things Mama brought me. And there's a special treat. Assorted bonbons.

Valentin watches in silence from his bunk, his hands folded around his knee. Molina sits near him with the candy box.

MOLINA
What's the matter? You don't like candy?

VALENTIN
About this morning ... about my temper, I'm really sorry.

MOLINA
Oh, nonsense.

VALENTIN
It wasn't even you I was mad at.
(pause)
But I've been thinking. Maybe I <u>am</u> mad at you.

MOLINA
Why?

VALENTIN
Because you're so kind. I don't want to feel obligated to treat you the same way.

MOLINA
(sing-song)
"Unable to take, unable to give."

Molina opens the candy box and slides it toward Valentin.

VOICE OF MOLINA
Everyday he opens up more and more with me.

NOTE: We leave and return to the candy in the cell as Molina recalls his latest meeting with the Warden and Pedro.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON ROOFTOP -- DAY

Molina faces them on the prison roof.

MOLINA
(continues)
Just give me a few more days. I'm sure he'll talk.

PEDRO
If he don't, he'll be interrogated again. And thoroughly this time.

MOLINA
But he's too weak to be tortured. If he drops dead, we all lose out.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DUSK

Valentin sits on the floor beside the half-empty candy box.

VALENTIN
I can't take someone being nice to me without asking anything in return.

MOLINA
Well, if I'm nice to you, it's because I want your friendship and, why not say it?... your affection.
(offers cigarette)
The same way I try to be nice to my mother who's never harmed anyone, and who accepts me for what I am and loves me. It's like a gift from heaven, and the only thing that keeps me going, the only thing.
(lights cigarette)
And you too are a very good person.

Valentin, embarrassed, moves to the wall and smokes the cigarette.

MOLINA
Very selfless and devoted, risking your life for your ideals, ready to die even in here for what you believe in. Am I embarrassing you?

VALENTIN
(shrugs)
No.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON ROOFTOP -- DAY

Molina turns to the Warden.

MOLINA
Well, sir, there might be a way to speed this up. I'm not sure but I'm --. It's just a hunch.

WARDEN
(exasperated)
Say it straight, Molina.

MOLINA
You know inmates, sir. When a cell-mate leaves, they feel all sentimental and helpless. Well, he's gotten a bit attached to me, so if he thought that I was being released, he's bound to open up and talk. Get a few things off his chest.

WARDEN
(to Pedro)
What do you think?

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Valentin still leans against the wall with his cigarette. Molina watches from the bunk.

MOLINA
So that's why I respect you and like you, and hope that you feel the same way about me. So I want us always to be friends.

VALENTIN
Sure.

MOLINA
The reason I wanted to get this in the open is because I may be leaving, since I just heard from the Warden that I may be paroled soon.

VALENTIN
-- When?

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON ROOFTOP -- DAY

Pedro removes his suitcoat, revealing a shoulder holster.

PEDRO
Tell him you're up for parole, that we're gonna move you to another cell in 24 hours.

MOLINA
Yes, sir.

WARDEN
And this is your last chance, so get going. You got 24 hours.

MOLINA
One thing, sir. You can't catch a fish without bait. I need more food. This time, sir, I prepared a list.

Molina hands him a long list.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Molina still sits on Valentin's bunk.

MOLINA
They'll probably move me to another cell in 24 hours. My lawyer says that's the procedure.

Valentin turns away. Molina walks back to his own bunk.

MOLINA
I don't want to get my hopes up too high. Do you want an apple?

VALENTIN
No, thanks. I guess I should be happy for you, but uh -- I don't know.

MOLINA
Yes, all I wanted in life was to get out of here and take care of my mother. Nothing else mattered, but now that my wish might be --.

VALENTIN
Be happy, dammit. I'd give anything to get out.

MOLINA
But is it fair?

VALENTIN
What?

MOLINA
That I always end up with nothing. That I don't have anything truly my own in life.

VALENTIN
You've got your mother.

MOLINA
Yes, but listen though. She's had a life and lived it. She had a husband and a son, but I'm still waiting.

VALENTIN
At least she's still alive.

MOLINA
But so am I. When is my life supposed to begin?
(pause)
When do I strike it lucky and have something for my own?

VALENTIN
(approaches)
Right now. You just got lucky. Take advantage of it. You're getting out.

MOLINA
And do what? Hang out with my friends, a bunch of silly old queens like me? Tell a few jokes until I can't stand the sight of them, because they're a bunch of mirrors that send me running for my life? My life of waiting for nothing.

VALENTIN
Tell a movie. You'll feel better.

Curfew BUZZER. The dim light-bulb goes out. Valentin moves to his bunk.

Alone in the dark, Molina turns to the moonlit window and spins another web.

MOLINA
Once upon a time, on a tropical island far away, there lived a strange woman.
(pause)
She wore a long gown of black lame that fit her like a glove. But the poor thing, she was caught in a giant spider web that grew from her own body.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROPICAL BEACH -- NIGHT (SPIDER MOVIE)

The masked SPIDER WOMAN stands silhouetted against the moonlit ocean, waiting and waiting inside a huge silvery spider web.

Gliding from the web, she moves across the sandy beach and slowly approaches the body of a MAN washed onto her island shore.

VOICE OF MOLINA
One day a shipwrecked man drifted onto the beach.

She kneels in the sand beside him. INSERT: Valentin leans against the cell wall, listening in the candlelight.

VOICE OF MOLINA
She fed him and cared for his wounds. She nourished him with love and brought him back to life.

The Shipwrecked Man opens his eyes.

VOICE OF MOLINA
When he awoke, he gazed up at the Spider Woman and saw a perfect tear-drop slide from under her mask.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- NIGHT

Misty-eyed, Molina steps into the candlelight and approaches Valentin. INSERT: The Shipwrecked Man lifts his head for a closer look at the Spider Woman.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
Why is she crying?

Molina answers with a lump in his throat.

MOLINA
I don't know. Why do you always need explanations?
(sad sigh)
Valentin, I'm tired. Tired of suffering. You're not the only one they've hurt. You don't know, I hurt so much inside.

VALENTIN
Where does it hurt you?

MOLINA
In my neck and shoulders. Why does the sadness always jam up in the same spot?

Valentin places a sympathetic hand on his shoulder. Molina tightens up and pulls away.

MOLINA
Please. Don't touch me.

VALENTIN
Can't a friend even pat your back?

MOLINA
(sits on bunk)
It only makes it worse.

VALENTIN
Why?

Molina, dropping his many masks, speaks with stark vulnerability.

MOLINA
Because I've fallen in love with you.
(pause)
I'm sorry, Valentin, I wish it hadn't happened.

VALENTIN
(looks away)
I understand.
(looks back)
Don't be ashamed.

Valentin moves to Molina's bunk and tentatively sits down. Molina, motionless, keeps looking away. Valentin clears his throat and says:

VALENTIN
Can I touch you?

MOLINA
(looking away)
If it doesn't disgust you.
(pause)
I'd like you to.

Valentin wraps a friendly arm around his shoulders. Molina shudders, then turns and looks apprehensively into his eyes.

MOLINA
Can I touch your scar?

VALENTIN
(shrugs)
Sure.

Molina gently caresses the scar near Valentin's eyebrow, then rests his head on Valentin's chest and whispers:

MOLINA
Do what you want with me, because
that's what I want.
(pause)
If it doesn't disgust you.

VALENTIN
(hesitant)
Okay.

Molina trembles. Valentin holds him against his chest like a father comforting a child. Molina looks up and says:

MOLINA
You are so kind to me.

VALENTIN
No. You're the one who's kind.

Valentin straightens up and removes his shirt, then leans forward and blows out the candle.

The cell is dark. The camera lingers on the candle-spark amid whisps of smoke.

MOLINA (O.S.)
Wait. I'm squeezed against the wall. That's better.
(pause)
No, wait. Let me lift my legs.

The spark fades. The screen is BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina, radiant, looks at the morning sunlight.

MOLINA
You know when I woke up, I put my hand to my eyebrow, to feel my scar like --

VALENTIN
You don't have one.

MOLINA
-- like I wasn't me anymore. As if somehow I was you.
(pause)
Look, let's not talk about this. Let's not talk about anything at all. Just for this morning I'm asking. Aren't you going to ask me why?

VALENTIN
Why?

MOLINA
Because I'm happy, I'm really happy, and I don't want to spoil it.
(sad smile)
The nicest thing about feeling happy is that you think you'll never feel unhappy again.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Pedro, seething, leans into Molina's face.

PEDRO
You shit-face motherfuck. Talk!

Molina looks down in fear. The Warden wheels forward and motions Pedro away.

WARDEN
Let me handle this.
(wheels closer)
Look at me, Molina. What's the matter? You're afraid his group will kill you, is that it?

MOLINA
No sir. I want to help.

WARDEN
So what did he say?

MOLINA
Nothing. Wouldn't it be worse if I told you something that wasn't true?

WARDEN
I'll have to move you to another cell, Molina.

MOLINA
No sir, please. Don't do that. As long as I'm with him, there's still a chance that he might talk.

Pedro leans around the Warden into Molina's face.

PEDRO
You faggot piece of shit! You fell in love with that bastard.

WARDEN
Okay, Molina. You can go.

Molina stands up. The Warden reaches in his pocket.

WARDEN
Get your things ready. You're leaving today.
(hands document)
Here, the Ministry approved your parole.

Molina kisses the Warden's hand.

MOLINA
Thank you, sir.

WARDEN
And no more hanky-panky with the little boys.

MOLINA
Oh no, sir. I swear.

Molina leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Molina pulls his mother's photo from the wall and packs his suitcase. Valentin stoops beside him.

VALENTIN
They, they would never suspect you. I mean really, there's no risk at all.

MOLINA
Sorry, I can't do it. I, uh, I'm just too afraid.

VALENTIN
All you have to do is give them a message. From any public phone.

MOLINA
No. No names, no phone numbers, nothing. I'm terrified of the police.

VALENTIN
Okay. I guess I shouldn't drag you into this.

Valentin moves to the far corner. Molina watches him.

MOLINA
I swear, Valentin. My only desire is to stay here with you.

VALENTIN
Take care of yourself.

MOLINA
Valentin, I've only loved two people in my life. My mother and you.

VALENTIN
I'm gonna miss you, Molina

MOLINA
At least the movies.

VALENTIN
(smiles)
Yeah, whenever I go to sleep, I'll probably be thinking of you and your crazy movies.

MOLINA
And whenever I see bonbons, I'll be thinking of you.
(pause)
Valentin, there's something I'd like to ask you, although we've done much more.
(pause)
A kiss.

VALENTIN
Okay. But first promise me something.

MOLINA
I told you, I can't. I'm so sorry.

VALENTIN
No, no, no.
(approaches)
Promise you'll never let anybody humiliate you again, that you'll make them respect you. Promise me you'll never let anybody exploit you again. Nobody has the right to do that to anybody.

MOLINA
(deeply moved)
I promise. Thank you.
(pause)
Valentin?

VALENTIN
What? The kiss?

MOLINA
No. The uhh. The phone number.

Valentin, overwhelmed, hugs him. Molina, surprised, returns the embrace.

VALENTIN
Wait a few days. Dial two times and hang up. The third time...

Valentin whispers in his ear. Molina nods twice. Their eyes meet. Valentin grips his shoulders and kisses him on the mouth.

The Guard unlocks the door, then steps inside and says:

GUARD
Molina, let's go.

Molina picks up his suitcase and moves toward the door.

VALENTIN
Wait.

Valentin holds out the heart-shaped box. Molina, touched, takes it and looks deep into his eyes.

VALENTIN
Good luck, Molina.

Molina nods with a sad smile. The Guard pushes him outside.

GUARD
Come on.

The door is slammed shut on Valentin.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD -- DAY

The Guard escorts Molina across the courtyard to the gate.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL -- DAY

Valentin, alone, paces the empty cell, then sits down and stares at Molina's bunk.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON GATE -- DAY

Molina crosses the busy street to a bus stop, then turns to the nearby counter of an open cafe.

MOLINA
A beer.

The waiter uncaps a beer bottle.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Pedro opens the venetian blinds and watches Molina sipping beer at the bus stop. We HEAR him typing a Secret Police report.

VOICE OF PEDRO
Subject was granted a special parole by the Minister of Justice, on orders from the Department of Political Surveillance. The Department believes he will lead our agents to the cadre of Valentin Arregui.

The bus arrives. Molina tosses his bottle in a trash can and climbs on board.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS -- DAY

Molina watches the passing city with sad and empty eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Molina opens the door, moves quietly down the hallway and sees her at the sewing machine, unspooling thread with the quiet precision of a spider.

MOLINA
-- Mama.

MOTHER
(surprised)
Ahhh.

She hurries into his waiting arms. He wraps her in a warm embrace.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET -- NIGHT

Molina, wearing a leopard pullover, crosses a smoke-filled cabaret to a table of MIDDLE-AGED HOMOSEXUALS. They flatter him with campy flair.

GROUP VOICES
-- Luisa! So nice to see you!
-- You look great! Ten years younger, darling. Doesn't she?
-- The return of the Leopard Woman.

Molina's transvestite friend Greta finishes a song on the small stage and approaches the microphone.

GRETA
(rowdy applause)
Oh shut up, you bunch of faggots.
(indicates Molina)
I'd like to welcome home a cherished sister who sacrificed Lord-knows-how-many precious nights to pay a stupid debt to a hypocritical society.
(throws a kiss)
This is for you, lovely Luisa.

He sings in a feminine voice. Molina, touched, nods.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Molina, motionless, sits in the bay window. His stark sad eyes gaze across the city lights at the prison on the dark horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Pedro waits in a car parked in the shadows. His piercing eyes are fixed on Molina in the bay window. We HEAR him file a police report.

VOICE OF PEDRO
Surveillance reveals subject has not returned to work and almost never leaves home. He spends his evenings staring out the window for no apparent reason.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Molina sips coffee alone at a table. Gabriel approaches.

GABRIEL
You sure you won't eat something?

MOLINA
Just coffee.

GABRIEL
You wanna talk, Molina? Is something wrong?

MOLINA
No, I'm just not gonna see you for awhile. I'm going away.

GABRIEL
With another boy?
(sad smile)
That's good. Don't get arrested again. You're too old for it.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Molina sits with his arm around his frail mother. They are bathed in the blue radiance of a late movie on TV.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Molina slumps in bed in the robe he wore in prison. A red lamp illumines his poster of Rita Hayworth.

His sad eyes stare at the red box in his lap. His fingers trace the heart-shaped edges.

CUT TO:

INT. BAY WINDOW -- NIGHT

Molina sits in the bay window with his head in his hands, then lifts his head and gazes across the rooftops at the distant prison.

Wearing a yellow satin jacket, he is dressed to go out but remains seated. Finally he sighs and moves to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- NIGHT

Molina enters an empty subway station, glances around and approaches a row of futuristic phones.

He dials twice and hangs up, then dials a third time and nervously brushes back his red-tinted hair.

MOLINA
I have a message from Valentin Arregui.
(short pause)
Yes, a pay phone.
(short pause)
Excuse me, is that really necessary?
(long pause)
Alright. I'll be wearing a red scarf.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK -- DAY

The BANK TELLER hands Molina a thick wad of money.

TELLER
You don't have to close your account. There's no penalty if you maintain a minimum balance of --.

MOLINA
Thank you. Do you have an envelope please?

Molina slips the money in the envelope and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Molina sits on a park bench with Greta and hands him the envelope.

MOLINA
This is for Mama. To take care of her while I'm gone. Please

GRETA
All right, I'll handle it.
(pause)
Wherever you're going, it's probably for the best.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Molina tiptoes into his mother's bedroom and whispers:

MOLINA
Mama, you look so beautiful.

She is asleep. He gently kneels beside her.

MOLINA
You remember, Mama, when I was little and you used to come into my room to kiss me goodnight. I always pretended to be asleep, but I was always waiting for your kiss.
(pause)
Although you're sleeping now, I know you understand me. It's time for me to take care of my own life. You understand, don't you, Mama?
(pause)
Don't be sad.

He kisses her forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLINA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Molina steps to his bedroom mirror and, expressionless, ties a red scarf around his neck. Rita Hayworth watches over his shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS -- DAY

Molina, tense, jockeys his way through a street jammed with pedestrians. Glancing up, he spots Pedro and three Secret Agents on an overpass.

Frightened, Molina plunges into the crowd. Pedro sprints down the overpass and barges through the crowd, his Agents right behind him.

Molina turns a corner into a shopping arcade and, hurrying, glances back. He sees Pedro round the corner and stare into his eyes.

Molina desperately elbows through the shoppers. Pedro keeps a safe distance.

Struggling, Molina weaves his way inside a dense cluster of pedestrians, then darts down a narrow alley.

Pedro scans the four alleys. Molina is gone.

PEDRO
Go that way. Hurry.

The Agents split into two groups and go the wrong way.

CUT TO:

EXT. CATHEDRAL SQUARE -- DAY

Molina steps from an alley into an open square. Fingering his red scarf, he searches the crowd for Secret Police.

Relieved, he crosses the square to the cathedral and stops beside a BEGGAR playing an accordian. Pretending to listen, he scrutinizes the street and nervously taps his teeth.

A white taxi slowly approaches the cathedral steps. The YOUNG WOMAN beside the driver nervously eyes Molina.

He hesitantly stoops down and sees a pistol half-hidden by a newspaper on her lap. She leans out the window.

LYDIA
-- Who are you?

MOLINA
I have a message from Valentin.
Are you Lydia?

LYDIA
Yes, get in. Quick.

Molina reaches for the door handle.

PEDRO
Get 'em!

Suddenly an Agent slams Molina aside and thrusts a revolver in the window. Lydia rapid-fires two shots and blasts the Agent to the pavement.

The taxi roars away. Molina runs. Pedro and two Agents bolt forward, firing at the taxi careening through the terrified crowd.

Turning, Pedro sprints after Molina disappearing into a dark alley. The two Agents follow at top speed, firing warning shots in the air.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA -- DAY

Molina, gasping, races along the dark alley toward the sunlit plaza across a busy avenue.

Pedro barrels around the corner with his automatic pistol and charges down the alley. Bystanders run for cover.

PEDRO
Molina! Stop!

Molina rushes toward the plaza when, suddenly, the white taxi skids to stop on the avenue directly ahead. Lydia rapid-fires three shots out the window.

Molina, twisted sideways, grabs his bleeding chest. The taxi screeches away. Molina lurches across the avenue into the plaza.

Bystanders scream and scatter. Pedro reaches the corner and fires at fleeing taxi, then aims at Molina and strides into the plaza.

Molina, clutching his blood-stained shirt, staggers into a flock of pigeons. Agents surround him with aimed handguns. Molina turns and faces them, then drops to his knees.

The pigeons scatter. Pedro motions to an Agent.

PEDRO
Get the car. Move, hurry.

The Agent runs. Pedro steps forward and slowly circles behind Molina, then jams the automatic against the back of his head and frisks him.

The car pulls up. Pedro jerks Molina to his feet.

PEDRO
Get up. Move! Get in the car.

Pedro hurls Molina in the backseat, climbs in and slams the door. The car speeds away.

CUT TO:

INT. PEDRO'S CAR -- DAY

Molina lies stretched out on the backseat. Pedro straddles his waist and sticks the automatic in his face.

PEDRO
The number. Tell me the phone number and you go to the hospital.

Molina spits up foamy blood, then calmly gazes at Pedro.

PEDRO
Talk! You fucking fag!

Molina's eyes slowly close. His head slumps sideways.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLUM -- DAY

The car turns off a busy street into a shanty-town slum and stops beside a pile of garbage.

Pedro drags Molina's body from the backseat and dumps it on the garbage.

VOICE OF PEDRO
Subject was shot to death by the extremists. His recent activities, such as closing his bank account, suggest that he planned to escape with them. Also, the way he was shot seems to indicate he had agreed, if necessary, to be eliminated by them.
(MORE)

PEDRO (Cont'd)
(pause)
In any case, it appears he was more deeply involved than we suspected.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INFIRMARY -- DAY

Valentin, dying, lies on a cot. His face is swollen with bloody bruises. His chest is disfigured by electric burns.

A prison INTERN takes out a hypodermic needle.

INTERN
This is morphine. So you can get some rest, okay?

Valentin nods feebly. The Intern injects the needle.

INTERN
My God, the way they worked you over.
(removes needle)
Just don't tell about this or I'll lose my job. Count to forty and you'll be asleep.

Valentin takes two deep breaths and falls sound asleep. A woman's dream-like hand slowly reaches out and touches his wrist.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
... Marta ...

Valentin turns in his sleep and sees the beaming smile of his love. Marta, vibrant in a pure white dress, caresses his battered head and tenderly tugs him to his feet.

MARTA
Come, Valentin, come with me. Don't be afraid. You won't wake up in the cell.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON COURTYARD -- DAY (DREAM)

Running hand-in-hand, Marta leads Valentin across the dark courtyard toward the gate. The guards and prisoners cannot see them. Valentin, bleeding, stops and looks back.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
-- What about Molina?

VOICE OF MARTA
Come, my love. Only he knows if he died happy or sad.

She takes his hand and opens the prison gate, revealing a burst of sunlight.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND -- DAY (DREAM)

Smiling in the sunshine, they run toward the ocean across a sandy beach -- the same beach in Molina's movie about the Spider Woman.

Valentin, radiant, has no scars or wounds. Stopping at the shoreline, he brushes back her hair and looks into her eyes.

VOICE OF VALENTIN
I love you so much. That's the one thing I never said, because I was afraid of losing you forever.

They kiss warmly. Marta caresses his healed face and looks into his loving eyes.

VOICE OF MARTA
That can never happen now. This dream is short, but this dream is happy.

Holding hands, they wade into the water and climb into a wooden rowboat. Taking the oars, Valentin rows farther and farther toward the sparkling horizon.

THE END